

NEWARK BOARD OF EDUCATION
ACTION MEETING
WEST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL
MAY 29, 1979

EXCERPTS OF MINUTES OF
MEETING OF THE NEWARK
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
ACTION MEETING

BEFORE: NANCY J. GILMARTIN, Certified Shorthand Reporter

AT: THE NEWARK BOARD OF EDUCATION
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey

Date: February 25, 1980

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VICTOR DE LUCA: My name is Victor DeLuca. Tonight I'm representing the Ironbound Community School. As you may or may not know, the Community School became a Newark Board of Education School five years ago. It entered into a lease and contract with the Board of Education for a five-year term. That term is up this year.

We worked pretty hard over January and February to draft a proposed lease and contract for the upcoming year and we submitted it to Mr. Kittrels on February 13th. As of this day, we have not received any word from his office as to the disposition.

We have been given deadlines as to when we will hear that answer. We were told April 15th. Last week, we were told this week. I didn't come here to say that much about that. I just wanted to state that we're, on our part, we're actively working, trying to renegotiate and reenter this arrangement with the Board of Education.

What I'd like to go into a little bit is the arrangement. I think the five years have been both good and both bad -- both good and bad. It's been difficult for both parties, but I think it

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2 said something. I think five years ago, the
3 Board of Education, sitting just like you are now,
4 made a statement that they were going to look at
5 education in Newark and take an opportunity to
6 experiment with the different types of education
7 which included individualized instruction and
8 real parent involvement. That was five years ago.

9 A lot of things have happened in that five
10 years, but I think we're still talking about what's
11 best for the student and what's best for the family
12 as a whole.

13 I've heard many people on this Board speak
14 about the need to get back to basics, the need to
15 make sure that children are given the proper tools
16 to carry forth in life. I think there is a mis-
17 nomer or misunderstanding about our school. In
18 no way do we neglect that. None of our children
19 are not taught to read, are not taught to write,
20 are not taught the basics. That's an integral
21 part of our program, but while we're doing that,
22 we're also able to deal with the social side of the
23 child, an effective, if you will, development.
24 So that the total child is learned and grows to-
25 gether.

I think that's been proven.

And our tests scores have been outstanding. They can be documented, and while they are outstanding, they only measure the basics and they don't even measure the social side, the social development of our students. So, I think that's an additional plus that we have to look at when we're judging our school.

I don't come here with our hat in our hands. I don't think that's the relationship that we're in. I come here as an equal partnership -- equal partner in a partnership of education for children. I'm not saying that the Ironbound Community School is not different. It is different. So is Science High School, so probably is Wilson Avenue over on Ann Street, over Speedway Junior High School, over Broadway Junior High School. Every school is different. Every school has its own dynamics, its own teachers, its own nucleus.

Now, why we're here is because we've come to say we need to sit down and talk and continue this partnership.

We certainly need to have an answer from the Board. It is similar -- somewhat unfair at

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2 this point with only one more month of school for
3 parents and staff not to know what school their child
4 is going to next year if, in fact, the Community
5 School is not going to be part of the Newark Board
6 of Education.

7 Many of you have come down. We have invited
8 many of you and you haven't been able to make it
9 yet and the invitation is still open. It's not
10 a closed school. In many respects, it is part of
11 a growing corporation, the Ironbound Community
12 Corporation, in that we're able to deal with the
13 total family both in education and health, from
14 preschool to adult education.

15 In many ways, you're getting a lot more for
16 your money. So, we're asking you to give us an
17 answer, after careful evaluation, and we're then asking
18 you to know our school firsthand and come down and
19 visit and come down and talk with the children and
20 with the parents and we hope that we can continue
21 in this partnership and that we can continue to
22 come to Board meetings and talk about the business
23 of educating children and, I think, if we can do
24 that, then our relationship will be much smoother.
25 Thank you.

CARL SHARIF: Thank you.

Can I find out what's the story with the Ironbound Community School at this point in time?

ALONZO KITTRELS: I think Mr. DeLuca outlined precisely what the situation is; that we had initially established April 15 as a date for information to be provided to the parents at Ironbound Community School; that since that time, I believe last week, I saw some of the parents outside this building and we indicated that information will be provided this week.

I'd like to just remind the Board that this item was to be discussed during the budget hearings. I believe a letter was forwarded to the Board and I requested that the administration be given an opportunity to review the progress of the school and make an appropriate recommendation to the Board regarding the program.

That has not yet been finalized. We do intend to adhere to the time schedule that we established; that is, some discussions this week regarding recommendations that I will make to the Board regarding the school. Regret that we were

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2 unable to make it prior to this time, but a
3 meeting will take place this week with Mr. DeLuca,
4 between parents, the principal at the school and
5 my staff regarding the future of the Ironbound
6 School.

7 CARL SHARIF: Dr. Heldago.

8 DR. HILDA HELDAGO: Mr. Chairman, it
9 seems to me that if this kind of staff and
10 community decisions are going to be reached this
11 week, that this item will not come to the Board at
12 the earliest will be June. It will not be
13 approved until the end of June at the Action
14 Meeting and it seems to me that at that place, a
15 school like the Ironbound Community School, that
16 depends so heavy in parent involvement and participa-
17 tion in the total educational component, that a
18 very disadvantage or position or not knowing until
19 the very end of June whether they will or will not
20 be in operation come September because even if the
21 negotiations between the office of the Superinten-
22 dent and the people in the school takes place,
23 there's no way the Board can take action on this
24 item until the teacher meeting. And I think that
25 is unfair to put the parents and the children in

that kind of uncertainty of literally ending the school year and not knowing where the children will be for next year for sure.

ALONZO KITTRELS: Mr. Sharif.

CARL SHARIF: Mr. Kittrels.

ALONZO KITTRELS: That was clearly not our intent, Dr. Heldago. Our intent, as I outlined to the parents last week, that this week they will know precisely where I stand. If, based on information that I provide, parents are not satisfied, then I would arrange immediately with your approval a meeting to have this matter further discussed in an instructional committee long before the June meeting. And it was my intent to provide this information this week so that other discussion meetings could take place so it would not be waiting until the Action Meeting of June for some action on the part of this Board.

Clearly, a contract expires at the end of this school year and it will take a recommendation to continue the arrangement with the Ironbound Community School. If we make a commitment that we will make such a recommendation to the Board, I would hope that the Board would act on it in a

1 favorable manner. However, if we indicate this
2 week that is not out intent to make such a recommenda-
3 tion to this Board with the request of the parents,
4 if they feel that a meeting with instructional
5 committee would be helpful, then I will attempt to
6 schedule such a meeting to avoid last minute
7 determinations regarding the continuing of the
8 school in September.
9

10 DR. HILDA HELDAGO: Mr. Chairman, my question
11 still remains. The instructional committee does
12 not make contractual agreements with any party.
13 It is this Board who makes the contractual agree-
14 ments with parties and as the best of my under-
15 standing, again, whatever the decision is taken
16 by this Board, it puts the Community School in a
17 position of uncertainty, at best, until the end of
18 June because the only one who makes contractual
19 agreements is this Board of Education and I'm,
20 in fact, concerned about that.

21 I'm further concerned because there seems
22 to be some question in the mind of the Superinten-
23 dent, one way or the other, by the fact that the
24 two positions are presented and, again, they sort
25 of point out to a basic theme that keeps recurring

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2 in this Board and that maybe the instructional
3 committee deals constantly.

4 I mean, then, here is a school with a five-
5 year contract. We definitely seem again to know
6 that in any five-year contract the last year should
7 be heavy on evaluation and because it will have
8 to be renewed and because education takes some
9 planning ahead, that these kind of situations
10 should have again been anticipated, provided for,
11 and as a matter of fact, I don't think it would
12 be unreasonable to say one year before the contract
13 is terminated the parties should know whether the
14 contract is going to be renewed at a future date.

15 When you're dealing with items like these
16 of children that are going to have to be transposed
17 from an educational system that has a definite
18 philosophy, a definite thrust, definite input to
19 maybe a system that is completely different, it
20 doesn't seem to me hard or unreasonable to ask
21 in the best interest of education that this kind
22 of decisions that we know can be anticipated and
23 provided for are taken care and that's educational
24 leadership and that's educational planning and
25 that's taking care of primary business of this

organization, which is the education of youngsters in our community.

I, for one, fail to see why we're constantly making last minute decisions about things that we know are going to come like the rain, the sky and the sun, and somehow or other is going to be eventually dead and we wait for the last minute and then we do it on crisis. Sometimes, we do it in a hostile environment because whatever decision, especially the decision has to be negative, then at that time there is really no time to engage into process that will allow for modifications, reasoning in maybe a nonhostile environment in which things to take place.

I'm very concerned about this repeating pattern that this Board is constantly forced to react on last minute things that should have been done yesterday and are going to have to be done that effect people in very definite ways.

ALONZO KITTRELS: Mr. Sharif.

CARL SHARIF: Mr. Kittrel.

ALONZO KITTRELS: I accept Dr. Heldago's comments as they relate specifically to the Ironbound Community School.

I do not completely accept that this has been a pattern over the period of months or years. I accept the fact that there could have been more planning, that information could have been provided at this point, certainly prior to this point.

Still, we have the issue before us and it must be addressed and, as I indicated, the process that I outlined last week to the parents is a process that we will follow and we will provide that information this week to the parents regarding my recommendation concerning the future of the Ironbound Community School.

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, NANCY J. GILMARTIN, a Certified Shorthand
Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, do
hereby certify that the foregoing is a transcription of my
notes as taken of tapes in the aforementioned matter to the
best of my knowledge, ability and understanding.

Nancy J. Gilmartin, Cst

DATED: March 3, 1980